The Commonweal

November 26, 1948

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Enigma of Poland

Lawrence T. King

PULSE OF THE NATION

Raymond J. Poltronieri

The Pope and Western Europe

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VOLUME XLIX 15c NUMBER 7

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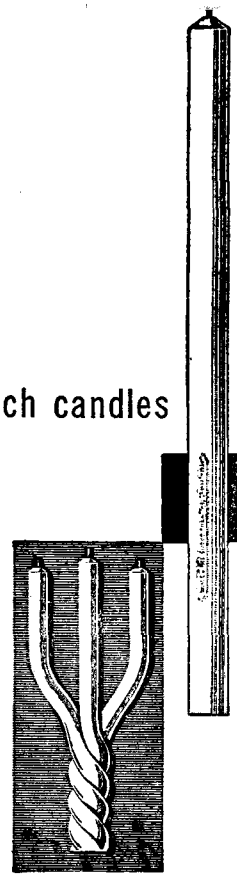

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The
COMMONWEAL

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THE COMMONWEAL *is indexed in the Reader's Guide, Catholic Periodical Index and Catholic Bookman Founded by the Calvert Associates, Inc., in 1924 with Michael Williams as President and Editor.*
Published weekly and copyrighted 1948 in the U.S.A. by The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, N. Y. MUrray Hill 3-9685. Entered as second-class matter February 9, 1934, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. U. S. and Canada $7 a year. Foreign $8. Single copies 15¢

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Pope Pacificus

THE SNAGS and snarls that beset Western Union are amply illustrated in the current news items: the lack of national plans for the Benelux countries and for Greece, as well as the incompatibility of the major plans submitted, have hamstrung the projected four-year European program. Mr. Attlee, meanwhile, has refused Mr. Churchill's attempt to smuggle conservatives into the British representation in the five-nation committee which is to meet presently in Paris in order to study a Franco-Belgian proposal for the convening of a European assembly, and a British proposal for a European council composed of representatives of all the governments to handle matters of common concern. Simultaneously, from London comes the news that steady progress is being made there by a permanent commission of five Western European Union powers in drafting a North Atlantic Defense Pact. A draft might, repeat might (if no one throws monkey wrenches into the works), be ready for transmission to Washington in a matter of days.

What's lost to the cause of Western Union on the roundabouts of political anxieties, incompetence or just plain pushings-around, is won on the swings of human beastliness, or, at best, narrow-minded miserliness. The alternative to a dog in the manger seems to be a free-for-all. Yet across the messy maelstrom of Western Union's labor pains, sound the grave words of the Sovereign Pontiff, speaking to delegates of fourteen nations who participated in the second congress of the European Union of Federalists. "There is no time to be lost," His Holiness said. "Indeed some people fear it is already too late." Quietly, categorically, he insisted that "European federation presents some undoubted difficulties but it is nevertheless *necessary* to bring it about as soon as possible. To achieve this union the great nations are asked to sacrifice part of their past greatness and to align themselves with other countries of the European continent to form a true European family."

You can't get something for nothing, the Pope makes quite clear. The abrogation of some part of national sovereignty is the price nations must pay for survival, just as America's bi-partisan foreign policy meant a sacrifice of place, though not of principle, for the party in power. France has now selected representatives of various parties to discuss Western Union, while Mr. Attlee's rejection of the opposition leader's plea to deal with European Unity on a bi-partisan basis may indeed "exercise a depressing effect on the movement for European unity." But as, cell by cell, slowly building, is made our mortal frame, so, in hunger and cold, in discomfort and disagreement, in blood and passion, Western Union is coming to be.

Texas Calls a Halt

APPARENTLY the Texas Railroad Commission has only been waiting for the end of summer touring and the normal replenishment of gasoline stocks to crack down on state fields where drilling results in sheer waste of natural gas—a burning, flaring unnatural phenomenon. The seventeen Texas fields now due for an unspecified degree of curtailment not only account for one-sixth of the state's oil production, but seven percent of the whole national output. Officials reached by the *Wall Street Journal,* said that restrictions on the seventeen fields where gas waste is most flagrant is only a first step toward conserving this invaluable source of energy.

The oil companies themselves parallel their search for new sources by developing more efficient extraction and refining methods and experimentation on other potential petroleum sources. Six of the curtailed Texas fields, for instance, have facilities for converting natural gas into gasoline. And it has just been reported that the

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federal Bureau of Mines has delivered the first shipments of an oil shale that is plentiful in Colorado to the laboratories of Standard Oil of New Jersey in Baton Rouge, La.

Or take the emphasis placed on conservation at the recent meeting of the American Petroleum Institute in Chicago, where Eugene Ayres of the Gulf Refining Company presented an over-all picture of the fuel resources of the United States. Nine-tenths of the energy we now use for heating, transportation, manufacturing and mining, lighting and the rest comes from underground, "fossil," unrenewable resources. Estimates give our petroleum resources but from 5 to 16 years to go; natural gas 5 to 12 years; oil shale 13 years. Only coal has a future extending into the 1970's (and well beyond). Little wonder that Mr. Ayres called for a shift from these woefully limited resources to "continuous, inexhaustible sources" deriving directly and indirectly from solar energy. Directly through the conversion of the sun's rays into electrical energy and their conversion into heat by means of lenses. Indirectly through water power and vegetation, each of which is supposed to be able to expand its present horsepower output—if intelligently developed—tenfold in the course of the next century.

Somehow all this arouses a lesser feeling of concern than the world's future food prospects, which were so glowingly, and rather convincingly, outlined recently in *Time* magazine. There are so many directly interested parties. The oil companies with their laboratories and technicians, manufacturers seeking cheaper and lasting sources of power, the business community in many localities, the sovereign states, the armed forces and other agents of the federal government. Too many vitally concerned and know-how people have an ear to the ground for us ever to run out of juice—even if the productive possibilities of atomic energy are not soon realized.

With soil the interests are diffuse. Despite all the scattered demonstration farms, areas in the South where diversification has replaced ruinous one-crop cultivation, and a moderately rising interest in sound agrarianism, even though conservation is a watchword of the day.

For who will devote himself to the problem with the intentness of the oil company technician? The agricultural corporations who produce an ever-increasing proportion of the nation's food? The tobacco growers or the mechanized cotton-field-owners? Anyone with but a passing and commercial interest in a tract of land? A farm bloc bent on keeping 90 percent parity? Or even the individual family-type farmer, beyond the fate of his own limited acreage? That is why with all their exaggerations and false remedies the neo-Malthusians and their best-selling books perform a useful function.

The Big Swim

IN THE three West Coast states, people are wondering if the creaky adage "where there's a will there's a way" has any more kick left in it than the slogan, "as Maine goes, so goes the nation." Voters in Washington, Oregon and California went so far overboard for old-age pensions that now the principal remaining inconvenience in life is how to save themselves from drowning. Oregon approved a measure calling for a $50 minimum monthly payment, ringing up a $9,000,000 monthly bill for the state, but as yet, no one has thrown out a lifeline to the state treasury. After election, with no means of financing this measure, Oregon was unable to get a single investment house to nibble at $2,000,000 worth of state bonds. Washington approved both pensions and a soldiers' bonus, and California estimates the cost of its pensions to be $100,000,000 yearly; as a result of it all, the three states will either soon be tax-happy or dollar-sad.

The situation might be diagnosed as a case of good-will inflation running wild away from the sobering fact of business protocol: where is the money to come from?

And this is the question more and more in the minds of federal economists too: from 1940 to 1948, outgoing payments under the federal social security system have steadily risen so that expenditures every year come closer and closer to the amount contributed, cutting down the reserve margin; already the day is forecast when it will be necessary to slice into Treasury receipts to meet social security payments—a forecast which can only mean more federal taxes to pay the bill.

With this double state and federal tax-load about to be fastened to his back, the taxpayer will be listening carefully to hear what Mr. Truman proposes in his forthcoming State of the Union message. The President campaigned for extension of social security, and word has it now that the Truman New Deal will be a program to expand social service benefits—old age, unemployment, health, education—into a "cradle to the grave" benevolent security plan, with the federal government taking the bill and the responsibility for this insurance more and more away from individuals and the states. To pay for it, the Government will boost employer and payroll taxes, the states will rely on sales taxes. Social justice is hardly to be won through social irresponsibility.

If the President's well-intentioned New Deal measures tempt anyone to think of the paternalistic state "taking care" of an irresponsible individual, from the cradle to the grave, he suffers a romantic dream, supposing that from now on life is a lark for the carefree individual. Jumping in with Oregon for the big swim, the great social experiment, he may turn up blue in the face—on the bottom.

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International Hangings

"INCLUDING Tojo, seven were condemned to hang and seventeen received life." After a two year trial and a six months adjournment, the International Tribunal for the Far East handed down these sentences upon the Japanese war criminals. Add this to Nuremberg. What do we get?

A very uncomfortable feeling in this department. The numerous, long, and able defenses of the various war crime trials have made us loath to try to argue out the issues, but they have not settled our stomach or quieted our mind or made our conscience serene. Certainly our emotions continue to react definitely and strongly against the whole business of the trials and condemnations.

Perhaps our most general sentiment is this, that there are acts and crimes and matters of conscience beyond the scope of laws which we ourselves are competent to share in writing and enforcing. In this war trial business we have the feeling that some group of men is setting itself up to exercise justice in a sphere, on a plane, that is beyond them, and they are implicating us as passive citizens. There is a smell of self-righteous pride, a perfume rarely absent in circles of liberal world reform. We can't see how we can know and understand enough about humanity and society and history to assert such justice; nor how we think we actually love enough to mete out punishment with a charity and justice equally ultimate.

Free Choice

"IF THE schools were closed an hour earlier and it were left to the kids to decide without compulsion," grumbled Mr. Arthur Garfield Hays, resentful of the New York State's Supreme Court's decision that releasing children from classroom attendance to receive religious instruction does not violate the Constitution, "all the kids would play baseball instead of going to church."

The freethinker's world he envisages out-Rousseau's the Court of Cockaigne. Kids without compulsion would never go to school at all, bless their hooky hearts, but would keep all schools closed forever. And then all the world would be apple-pie, except that, alas, the seas would run with blood, not ink. America has the highest juvenile delinquency record in its history, indeed, in recorded history anywhere. Without the compulsion of society the life of man, as Hobbes said long ago, is apt to be nasty, brutish and short; without the compulsion of hygiene, the child—and society—is dirty, smelly and diseased; without the freedom of faith, the human adult, like the human child, is compelled by passion and prejudice, by inherited taint and acquired tare. Whether he is a thirteen-year-old strangling his fellows in the best comic-book fashion, or merely Tommy scratching Jimmy's eyes out, or Jane biting Joan, the jungle has nothing on the nursery school, as every mother knows. It is good news indeed that Justice Elsworth has stated so clearly: "Historically and inherently, the people of our country are predominantly a religious people. Fundamental is the right of the parent to rear his child in a particular religious faith or to rear him as a non-believer if he so elects." For free choice is too great to be borne except by grown-up people.

Hillman Fund: the New Philanthropy

LAST week the first awards announced by the Hillman Foundation called attention to change in the pattern of philanthropic financing. The great private endowments and funds and foundations are being stopped by changes in the national economy. There are many good works which will not be financed in the future by generous gifts from large private fortunes amassed by successful capitalists. The good works—or what at least have been almost universally considered good works—can be stopped, or they can be made unnecessary by new social developments, or they can be taken over by the state, or else they can be supported by new forms of charity and philanthropy which are not dependent upon the development of huge wealth in individual possession.

The Hillman Foundation represents change in this last direction. It is a $1,000,000 "living memorial." The fund has been raised since Sidney Hillman's death "through voluntary contributions by union members, employers and groups." The first $30,000, now distributed, will finance scholarships, research projects and lectures. All this sounds very much in line with the country's traditions of philanthropy. It is, of course, not the first time that labor unions and workers' organizations have taken up the burdens of the Rockefellers and Carnegies and other private philanthropists. The Ladies Garment Workers, under David Dubinsky, have long been leaders, and few community chests in any of our cities have not benefited from union donations. Still, with the new victory of union labor at the polls, this fall is a good time to have the recognition of responsibility, and the act, clearly stressed.

The new Rockefellers and Carnegies will of course not carry on exactly like the old. Mr. Potofsky, who now guides the Amalgamated, has said: "The basic purpose of the Sidney Hillman awards will be to call wide public attention to outstanding public accomplishments and to create an attitude of public approval toward those who venture a little beyond ordinary concepts of social responsibility." The success of the foundation in this stated direction would lessen the need for some of the relief and rehabilitation branches of public charity, which "ordinary concepts of social responsibility" stubbornly continue to necessitate.

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The Enigma of the New Poland

Lawrence T. King

THE SUDDEN flareup that occurred last summer between Vice-Premier Wladyslaw Gomulka and the Polish Government brought out into the open for the first time the dissension that had been developing within Communist ranks on the ticklish issue of farm collectivization. The incident has been described rather accurately as a fight between the "nationalist" and "internationalist" factions of Polish Communism, with the former fearing that any hasty change from the present capitalist-Socialist system to one based wholly on the Soviet model, as proposed by the internationalists, would tend to alienate the peasant populace and ultimately weaken the Communist position in Poland.

The Communist Information Bureau (Cominform), still smarting from the effects of Marshal Tito's new-found independence in Yugoslavia, lost no time in cracking down upon M. Gomulka and his followers for flouting the Moscow line. From that point on, everything worked out according to script. The nationalists "admitted" the folly of their "reactionary" views, lauded the wisdom of the Cominform's policies and humbly submitted to the usual chastisement reserved for such recalcitrants.

Little news has emanated from Poland since the Cominform announced the settlement of that little intra-party imbroglio; but the incident, as short-lived as it turned out to be, has served to focus attention anew on the situation in Poland.

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The withdrawal of Hitler's armies from Poland in the winter of 1944 provided the world with a graphic picture of the most thorough example of indiscriminate destruction in the annals of warfare. Only the collapse of the Wehrmacht foiled the Nazis' carefully premeditated plan for annihilation of the Polish people and ultimate absorption of the country into the greater Reich—an inhuman and scientific program of mass murder which in six years took a toll of six million Poles, or twenty percent of the nation's total pre-war population.

Coupled with the irreparable manpower loss inflicted upon the prostrate nation, the Nazis also succeeded in reducing Poland's industrial potential by 33 per cent, her agriculture output by 62 per cent and her total wealth by 40 per cent. No other nation in Europe was so thoroughly devastated by battle or ground so brutally under the conqueror's heel. When the Nazi war machine finally capitulated in the spring of 1945, prospects for the post-war reconstruction of Poland were by far the darkest facing any of the war-shattered countries of Europe.

Today—less than four years after VE Day—Poland's industrial production is 33 per cent above her top pre-war figure, and by the end of 1949 agricultural production is expected to be brought to 80 per cent of the pre-war high.

These figures, published in the current annual report of the Bank for International Settlements, are significant in that they reveal that Poland has outdistanced most of the nations of Europe in rebuilding her national economy. In displaying such energy in tackling the awesome problem of rehabilitation, however, Poland has become somewhat of an enigma in the public mind.

At the end of the war when it became apparent that Poland's post-war destiny was to be tied to the Kremlin, foreign observers immediately began to speculate whether the surrender of political freedom by such an individualistic and proud people as the Poles would retard their economic recovery. This speculation became even more rampant after Poland's refusal, on orders from Moscow, to participate in the Marshall Plan at a time when such a program of American aid was held imperative to European recovery.

The abrogation by the Soviet-inspired Lublin provisional government of the Polish-Vatican concordat in September of 1945 also portended increasing tension between Church and State and helped create a situation which many observers believed would hamper the nation's speedy recovery.

These observers were quick to point out that the new Poland born out of the Yalta and Potsdam agreements was 96 per cent Catholic compared to 73 per cent before the war, due to the loss of 11 million inhabitants—mostly Greek Orthodox—and 69,711 square miles of territory east of the Ribbentrop-Molotov line to Russia. To anyone acquainted with Polish history, the prospects of a traditionally Catholic people working in concord with an out-and-out Communist régime did not appear very bright.

These factors have only served to heighten the enigma that is the new Poland, for in addition to the gains already cited the nation's Three-Year

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Plan for post-war recovery, covering the years 1947-1949 and within sight of realization at this writing, will have increased the country's industrial production 52 per cent over the 1938 figure while raising the average national income 16 per cent over the pre-war high. Achievements of such magnitude by a country devastated by battle, rent by partition and beset by an economic and political revolution must be regarded as nothing short of phenomenal.

As might be expected, Moscow has capitalized fully on Poland's remarkable progress, and the Kremlin's high-powered propaganda machine continues to blare forth facts and figures designed to exploit the situation as proof of the superiority of the Soviet brand of Marxism over the "decadent, capitalistic imperialism of the West."

It would be interesting to note what goes on in the mind of the average Pole who is subjected to this continuous propaganda barrage. Would he, for example, credit the Communist régime with the success of his country's efforts toward reconstruction? Or would he take the view that these gains were registered by the people of Poland in spite of the oppressive government foisted upon them by the Soviet Union?

Cut off from the West by an impenetrable iron curtain, it will be some time before the views of the average Pole on the subject are made known. In the meantime, however, it is possible to sift the mass of economic data put out by the Polish Ministry of Information and to get a logical and fairly clear picture of what is going on behind the scenes in Poland, a picture that is quite different from the one intended by Moscow or by the Warsaw puppet government.

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The year immediately following the collapse of the Nazi armies was the most crucial one in Poland's post-war period. With the nation's industry either totally destroyed or dislocated, with agricultural output far below subsistence levels and with the cream of the country's population killed during succeeding occupations by the Nazis and the Communists, the twin spectres of starvation and disease hovering in the wake of war threatened to continue the program of annihilation begun by Hitler's legions.

During this critical period, it was the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA)—financed largely by the United States—which stepped in and provided Poland with the aid so vitally needed to bridge the gap between war and peace. In two years, UNRRA delivered to Poland two million tons of food, clothing, livestock, medical supplies, gasoline, grain, tractors, trucks, farm and industrial equipment valued at $480,000,000. During the first half of 1946, the Polish provisional government admitted in one of its unguarded moments that 80 percent of its fluid income came from the sale of UNRRA supplies to the populace.

By June, 1947, the Western democratic nations had also extended the nation credits totaling $153,000,000, of which the United States advanced $90,000,000 and Great Britain $48,000,000.

It is interesting to note that Poland made its greatest strides toward economic rehabilitation during these first two post-war years—with the United States largely footing the bill through its contributions to UNRRA and the various monetary agencies set up to speed international fiscal stability. This is a phase of Polish recovery which is generally attributed to the "generosity" of the Soviet Union in the Communist press—just one of the many instances where the fruits of American humanitarianism have been appropriated by the Russians for their own propaganda use through the simple expedient of rigid control of all media of information.

In studying the charts and graphs of Poland's post-war progress, one is impressed most by the remarkable strides made in industrial production while agricultural output has gained at a much slower rate.

The territorial reshuffling effected at Yalta and Potsdam, of course, is the answer. The loss of Eastern Poland to Russia deprived the Poles of their only pre-war area which produced an agricultural surplus. On top of that, when the Nazis overran the country the retreating Poles applied the "scorched earth" policy to most of the productive lands.

During the early days of the Lublin government, agricultural reform was the chief topic of discussion, but little was actually accomplished along this line until three years later when the Communist political coalition assumed power in 1947—and even then the "reforms" were of dubious value. It is interesting to note that Poland's farmers registered their most impressive gains in 1946, working under pre-war conditions and without any appreciable aid from the government. During that year they actually increased the nation's food yield by 19 percent.

The large landed estates—long a thorn in the side of Poland's economic life—were taken over in due time by the government and transformed into nationalized farms. Poles who had hoped to see these estates broken up into family-sized holdings were soon dismayed to find out that about all the nationalization edict accomplished was to change ownership of these farms from private to government interests without any material benefit to the peasants. The tenant farmer who had once labored for the aristocratic landlords now found himself laboring as a tenant farmer for the Government.

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A commission sent to Poland by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization in the summer of 1947 found that these state farms were far too large to be worked productively without modern machinery and equipment. And the prospects of Poland obtaining such machinery are viewed as extremely remote. The commission also found that the Polish Government was channeling seed, fertilizer and other scarce items into the state farms at the expense of the small and medium-sized farms which, on a per acreage basis, were far more productive. The UNFAO recommended the immediate dissolution of these farms into smaller holdings as the only solution to Poland's problem of producing enough food to feed her population.

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This recommendation was promptly rejected by Warsaw—simply because it amounted to a reversal of agricultural policies followed in the Soviet Union and later exported into the self-styled "people's democracies" of Eastern and Central Europe. In addition to creating dissension within the government and arousing the animosity of the peasants, this blind allegiance of the Polish Communist Party to the dictates of the Cominform has actually retarded the country's agricultural progress.

In compensation for the loss of her valuable eastern farmlands, Poland was given two-thirds of East Prussia and a slice of Eastern Germany, an area inhabited before the war by 8,500,000 Germans and only a million Poles and containing immense coal deposits, a highly developed industry and valuable resources of lead, iron and zinc. In addition, the new accessions in the north and west gave Poland the well-integrated railway network of Silesia together with control of the Oder River which commands large sections of the Central European water transport system.

Acquisition of the Silesian coal fields has played a major rôle in Poland's remarkable economic comeback. Decline of British and German coal exports following the war has served to place Poland in a key position in supplying the nations of Europe with this vitally needed commodity. By 1947, the nation's level of exports was 80 per cent of the pre-war figure—due primarily to expansion of coal exports.

In calculating Poland's gains, therefore, it should be borne in mind that the annexation of this heavily industrialized area of Eastern Germany has been the most significant single factor which enabled the nation to get such an early start on the road to post-war stability.

How much credit does the present Communist government deserve? From 1946 to 1947—before the ascent to power of the single bloc coalition government—the nation had already increased industrial production from 67 to 92 percent, agricultural output from 38 to 57 percent and national income from 50 to 71 percent. It is evident from these figures, supplied by the Bank for International Settlements, that Poland was well on the road back before the nation's economy was reorganized after the elections of 1947.

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The question, of course, which remains uppermost in the Western mind is: Just how much are the people of Poland enjoying their hard-won material gains now that they have lost their political freedom?

To ardent Communists, the question would undoubtedly be dimissed as irrelevant with the typical Marxian retort that loss of political liberty is a small price to pay for economic freedom. To the people of Poland, however, the question is anything but irrelevant. Down through the centuries, Poles have always regarded themselves as a Western nation by culture, tradition and religion. Consequently they have always shared the essentially Christian concept of the primacy of the individual.

In a nation where all political opposition to an oppressive régime has been ruthlessly crushed and where proximity to the Soviet Union precludes all prospects for an immediate change of government on a broader democratic basis, Poles have reaffirmed their faith in this concept by rallying behind the one organization that has managed to resist the all-out drive towards complete Sovietization. That organization is the Catholic Church.

The Vatican's *L'Osservatore Romano* reports that every anti-Church manifestation by the government results in increased church attendance. Recently an order was promulgated by the government ordering every Polish boy and girl between the ages of 16 and 21 into national youth organizations. On the very same day the edict was issued mass pilgrimages to the Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochova were reported throughout the length and breadth of Poland. Coincidental? Perhaps, but one cannot help feeling that these spontaneous demonstrations of faith, timed as they were, reveal that the sentiment of the nation's youth remains aligned behind the Church despite the concerted campaign being undertaken to indoctrinate the younger generation with the materialistic ideology of Communism.

When the single-bloc government intensified its drive for undisputed power following the elections of 1947, the Polish hierarchy refused to remain silent in the face of threats and intimidations. Speaking for the bishops of the nation, the late August Cardinal Hlond, former primate

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of Poland, publicly protested against the extension of repressive measures against the people's civil liberties—measures which included the suppression of all non-Communist political parties, Communization of the once autonomous state universities and drastic changes in the nation's judicial system.

The clique in Warsaw carrying out the Kremlin's orders is fully cognizant that the Church alone stands in the path of its drive for complete domination over the lives of 24 million Poles. In the uneasy truce that has evolved between Church and State, only the Poles' traditional loyalty to Catholicism has dissuaded the government from making an out-and-out break with the Church and launching a violent campaign of "liquidation."

Any inclination, however, to view this firm stand of the hierarchy toward the totalitarian tendencies of the government as a negative attitude in the reconstruction of the country must be dismissed as a subversion of fact.

While resisting the Marxist program which purports to provide economic security at the price of individual liberty, the bishops of Poland have made it clear that they regard reconstruction as the No. 1 problem confronting the nation. They are realistic enough to know that Soviet Russia has no intention of relinquishing her political control over Poland. They realize equally well that any attempt to hamper the rebuilding of the war-ravaged nation would not hurt Communism as much as it would the Polish people.

Thus history seems to be repeating itself. During the 123 years of "The Captivity" — that period in Polish history when the nation was partitioned among Russia, Prussia and Austria-Hungary—Catholicism provided the one force that was able to keep alive Poland's traditions and culture despite every attempt by the occupying powers to obliterate all traces of the Poles' national consciousness.

Today the Church in Poland is in much the same position as it was during "The Captivity." It must carry on its apostolate under an oppressive government, nourishing and strengthening the faith of the people, providing moral guidance strong enough to counteract the insidious poison of Communistic materialism and acting as a moderating force in discouraging revolts against the government because it knows that such action, without concerted moral and military support from the West, is foredoomed to failure.

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What can be done from the outside to aid the Polish people in their struggle against the pressure that is continually being exerted on every side to turn their country into a Marxian bridgehead for the infiltration of Communism into Western Europe? Perhaps the most important thing to remember at the outset is that the United States and Great Britain share the guilt for the present Communist control of Poland. By withdrawing Western support from the constitutional Polish government in exile during the closing days of the war and acceding to Soviet demands for recognition of the Moscow-formed Lublin government, the United States and Britain actually paved the way for the ascendancy of Communism in a nation whose interests have always been diametrically opposed to those of Russia.

Writing to *The New York Times* from Warsaw, Sydney Gruson recently observed that "the statement that the great majority of people of every Eastern European country is anti-Communist, with the possible exception of Russia, contains more truth than can be found in most generalities." This view has been confirmed and given wide publicity by Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, leader of the last free government of Poland who escaped to this country during the Communist drive for power. Discussing the political situation in Poland, Mr. Mikolajczyk pointed out: The enforced merger of the Socialist and Peasant parties with the Polish Communist Party and the suppression of all remnants of opposition even in the Parliament is not a sign of Communist strength but of weakness. The Communists have no other way of imposing Moscow's dictates upon an unwilling people."

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Today the people of Poland are unalterably opposed to the régime foisted upon them without their concurrence. Tomorrow the story might be different. It has been said that a man's judgment cannot be better than the information upon which it is based. Give him the truth and he may still go wrong, but present him only with distorted and incomplete data, with biased propaganda and deliberate falsehoods, and you destroy his entire reasoning processes. Therein lies the great danger which threatens the people of Poland.

Nestled safely behind the iron curtain, the government of Poland has embarked upon a long-range program of Communist indoctrination aimed primarily at the youth of the nation. With the government in control of all media of information, the daily diet of malicious propaganda fed the Polish people over a period of years is bound to produce the desired effect, unless a concerted counter-effort is made to pierce this curtain with the most powerful weapon we have at our disposal—the truth.

It is encouraging to note that our State Department has at last bestirred itself from its lethargy, and is now preparing to take a more effective part in the ideological struggle for the mind of the human race. In stepping up its

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world-wide "Voice of America" broadcasts, our government has finally given some indication that it realizes that once the Poles and other suppressed peoples of Eastern Europe are won over to Communism they are lost forever to the West. In this psychological cold war, there is no place for half-way measures. We must utilize every medium of propaganda at our command—radio, newspapers, magazines, books, leaflets, motion pictures, posters—in ever-increasing volume to convince the people of Poland and the other satellite nations of Europe that Americans consider them apart from their puppet governments and that we are willing to aid them morally and materially in their fight for political freedom and individual liberty.

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Through the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and through church and secular organizations we should also make every attempt to improve our cultural ties with these people by increasing the number of scholarships available to European students for study in the United States. In that manner not only will we be training these students for eventual leadership in their own countries but we would also be creating the type of leadership that would most certainly be impervious to the lies and half-truths generated from Moscow.

Lenin and Stalin have demonstrated that it is possible to rule one of the most populous nations in the world through physical terror, but what is more important, they have also demonstrated that it is possible for a small clique actually to control the thinking of an entire nation. In the wake of Communist political domination over Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union is directing the same type of campaign that was launched after the Bolshevik revolution in Russia—a sinister campaign of falsehood that has aptly been described as a "twentieth century tyranny that makes otherwise intelligent people act in the interests of their oppressors and against their own best interests."

The men in the Kremlin realize that such a campaign cannot succeed overnight. In Poland, for instance, government edicts suppressing freedom of the press, nationalizing the state universities, formulating compulsory Marxist youth organizations are all part of a long-range scheme and aimed at producing a new generation of militant Communists.

Communism cannot survive in a nation where the truth is readily available. That is why all media of information are so rigidly controlled in a Communist society. In the present tug-of-war between the East and West, propagation of the truth becomes almost a moral responsibility for the United States.

The Pulse of the Nation

RAYMOND J. POLTRONIERI

MOST every textbook which tries to explain the secret of a happy marriage devotes at least one chapter to the importance of both the husband and wife having a number of similar interests and hobbies. At a certain neighborhood tavern there is a special room, to one side of the bar, in which are set several tables with red-checkered tablecloths and a number of wooden curved-back chairs. Here couples married for scores of years, couples married for years, couples recently married, and even young people who are courting may witness the weekly wrestling matches on the giant television screen while enjoying whatever drink they enjoy most or can afford.

The bar itself is patronized exclusively by men who stand with one foot on the bar-rail and their necks slightly twisted and who, through squinted eyes, also follow the television show.

There were two of these men who, although they did not carry on a running conversation, seemed more interested in the occasional remarks they threw to one another than in the outcome of the wrestling contest.

The younger man was tall and well-built, but there was around his eyes a dark look which could have come either from sadness or dissipation. The sun had had no part in producing his complexion and he appeared, in all, as a young man who had done neither anything of note nor anything notorious but who, if aroused, might be capable of either.

The older of the two was a thin, dour-looking man who wore glasses. He did not laugh easily for he did not immediately see the humor in conversations and situations which amused others and he was for this considered odd. He seemed to examine everything from all viewpoints to be certain his laughter would not be wasted or offend others. It was he who started the conversation.

"Are you working yet?" he asked.

"No, I'm not, John," answered the younger man; "it's not as easy as everyone seems to think to get a job today. I've been trying for three months now and I can't land anything."

"Well, it's the old story Bob. What can you do?"

"I don't know, I haven't had any experience to speak of."

"Well, then, what kind of work do you think you'd like to do?"

"To be truthful, John, I've never given it much thought. But something where you work your eight hours and then go home and forget about it. All the jobs in the want-ads today want five years' experience, a college degree and after work you're supposed to do some post-graduate work. Why, a routine like that would drive a man crazy."

"You must remember, Bob, the only way to get anywhere is to work harder than the next fellow."

"But if the other fellow works sixteen hours a day

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you're going to be hard pressed to do that."

The conversation at this point was interrupted by a great roar from those watching the television show. One of the wrestlers had been thrown from the ring and an elderly woman seated in a front row at the arena began to beat him with an umbrella, to the great amusement of both those at the stadium and those witnessing the match from the tavern.

"Have you ever thought," said John, picking up the conversation after the tumult had subsided, "of going into business for yourself?"

"I'm glad you asked me that, John. A friend of mine decided to go into business for himself. He bought a large, second-hand, ten-ton truck, rigged up some kind of motor and invented some sort of refrigerating device. Now when he drives it around it takes the moisture out of the air and produces some kind of ice-cubes. He now supplies most of the bars in his section with them. They phone his home and he makes a delivery, then he calls his wife and she tells him of the other orders that have come in. He's kept busy every evening and puts in about sixteen hours on week ends. This in addition to his regular job during the day."

"Isn't he under a strain like the boys who go to school at night after working all day?" asked John.

"Not so much. You see, the bartenders, when they pay for the ice-cubes, usually give him a few drinks on the house."

The conversation lulled and might have died entirely at this point had it not been that from the adjoining room came the voices of a man and a woman quarreling. From the names each called the other it was evident they were husband and wife.

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The immediate result of the family disagreement was that everyone in the tavern, in an effort not to become involved or drawn into the dispute, took an intense interest in some unimportant activity. The couples who had been merely watching the wrestling contest now studied it with a scholar's interest; the bartenders bent over their trays and prepared the drinks with the greatest care; the gentlemen who had been singing loudly now scrutinized the scores of bottles arranged on shelves behind the bar; and those who had been speaking casually with friends now drew close and discussed what must have been profound subjects in low, serious voices.

In the end there was such a silence and such an activity in doing nothing at all that an outsider, walking into the place, would have sensed immediately something was wrong.

John, on his part, now took a deep interest in the younger man's inability to find work. Where previously he made only routine comments, he now poured forth suggestions. He spoke nervously and quickly and he repeatedly turned his head to note the progress of the family argument.

"Perhaps," he said, "you are not using the right approach. Maybe you should sit down and figure out all the questions the interviewer can possibly ask you beforehand and then construct suitable answers. This will make a better impression."

"But what questions," asked Bob as calmly as ever and unconcerned over the nearby disturbance, "can he possibly ask me which I won't be able to answer? 'My name? My age? What experience?'"

"There's one question," answered John, "they always seem to stick in. It's 'Why do you think you'd like to do this type of work?' If you can make up a good answer to that one you'll go over big."

"Well, I have to do something, don't I?" interrupted Bob.

"No, no, no. That's just it. That's the kind of answer anyone might give. You must think of one that's different, one that will make an impression."

"Well, what answer would you give?" challenged Bob, slightly peeved.

"Let me think," said John. "What job are you being interviewed for?"

"Salesman."

"Salesman, salesman, salesman," mumbled John. "Ah, I have it. Ask me the question."

Bob was looking appraisingly through the window at three girls on the other side of the street as they passed beneath the street lamp.

"Ask me the question," repeated John, nudging Bob.

"What question?"

"The question we decided on before. 'Why would you like to do this type of work?' Ask me it."

"O.K." said Bob. "Why would you like to do this type of work?"

"Because," the response came quickly, and every word was accentuated, "it would let me keep my thumb on the pulse of the nation."

John paused and awaited a response which did not come. "Because," he repeated, "it would let keep my thumb on the pulse of the nation."

"'Because it would let me keep my thumb on the pulse of the nation?'" questioned Bob. "What does it mean?"

"A salesman," explained John proudly, "must travel around, meet all types and classes of people. He listens to their troubles, he knows what's going on. He has his thumb on the pulse of the nation, as it were."

"Do you think the fellow who's interviewing me will understand?"

"Of course he will. It'll go over big. Salesmen all have some such pet expression which, if you listen to them long enough, they repeat and repeat."

"Well," said Bob, "I've tried almost everything else; I may as well try that." Then, with the smile of an intelligent person who has discovered something ridiculous which has become universally accepted, he repeated softly: "Because it would let me keep my thumb on the pulse of the nation; because it would let me keep my thumb on the pulse of the nation. I hope I can remember it."

Both the televised wrestling show and the family quarrel having ended, the two men left the tavern. Near the doorway the bar owner was reprimanding the husband of the couple who had been quarreling because

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of the profanity they had used in the family-room in the presence of children. The husband was shaking his head in complete agreement as his wife pressed close to his side. She was holding her husband's arm with both her hands and on her face was an expression of supreme happiness.

"Well," said Bob, as they came to a corner at which they took different directions to get to their homes, "wish me luck."

"You bet, boy," John replied. "Let me know how you come out."

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The next morning Bob stepped briskly onto the elevator and, as it started its ascent, called out, "Fourteen, please," in what he felt was a deep, commanding voice.

The elevator operator turned and scowled at him and despite Bob's order made his first stop at the fifteenth floor. He stopped at every successive floor until he reached the thirtieth. He then informed Bob he would have to descend to the lobby and take the local elevator as the one he had taken was an express.

Bob finally found the fourteenth floor and found the office at which he had his appointment. Without hesitation he walked directly to the receptionist's desk and announced, "I'd like to see Mr. Wallace, please. I have an appointment."

The receptionist, at this early hour, was filing her nails with an emery stick and without looking up replied, "He hasn't come in yet; you'll have to wait."

This information disappointed Bob, but as no further explanations or instructions were forthcoming he decided to wait and seated himself in one of the chairs at the front of the office.

His mind began to wander. He surveyed the entire office. He was disturbed as he noted the many intricate business machines. He was irritated by the frivolous and leisurely attitude of those already employed at the office. He could see through the office windows the neighboring brick buildings which had huge advertisements painted on them.

Both his mind and body were relaxed and, as he slumped into the chair, the office door was thrown open and a great, boisterous man with a brightly colored tie and a cigar ran across the room toward Bob.

"You must be Bob Hanley," he shouted, so loudly that the others in the office looked up to see the cause of the excitement.

Bob was puzzled as to the proper reply. He hoped an admission would not cause the newcomer to injure either himself or the property around him, for his enthusiasm was such that arousing it further, might result in some violence.

"Yes," answered Bob finally.

"Ah!" The huge man paused. A great calm overtook him; he let his arms fall limply to his sides and threw his head heavenward.

"Come with me, come with me, come with me," and with this he took one of Bob's arms and led him to his private office.

Mr. Wallace closed the door and directed Bob to be seated in an expensive chair at one corner of his large desk.

"This position," he began, "offers a great opportunity to a young man such as yourself. Do you like to travel?"

"Indeed I do," answered Bob, and remembering John's advice, added, "Are there any openings in London or Paris?"

"No," Mr. Wallace replied, "the traveling at first will be more on a local scale; to the neighboring cities in New Jersey and perhaps occasionally to Philadelphia."

"Well, I've no particular objection to that. What type of position is this?"

"You won't have to worry about that at first," Mr. Wallace said. "You'll be assigned to a group of experienced men who will show you the ropes. And it will be well for you to pay strict attention. Many of them have been doing this work for years and are the top men in the field. I only wish I had such an opportunity when I was your age."

"What does the work consist of?" asked Bob, still anxious to have his previous questioned answered.

"Let me tell you a little story," said Mr. Wallace. "Your being here like this reminds me of it. This took place some thirty-five years ago and it was the first job I ever applied for. I was only fifteen at the time. I walked right into the office of the corporation president. 'What are you doing here?' he said. 'We're looking for men, not children.' This hurt me so there are times I can still feel the pain. 'Look here,' I answered, 'I did you a favor by coming here. Don't think you're doing me any favors by speaking to me!' With this I bolted out of his office. He came running after me screaming, 'Come back, come back, you're just the man we need.' A few years after that I decided to go out for myself. I started with just a hole-in-the-wall office. Today I'm looking around for more office space which I can't find."

Mr. Wallace paused and looked around his own office as though the additionally needed office space might be found somewhere there.

"I tell you that story," he continued, "not to pat myself on the back. You can take it for what it's worth, but since you are naturally interested in becoming successful you must learn of success from someone who is successful. A man who hasn't made anything of himelf can't guide you very well, can he?"

Bob was at the point where he would have worked for nothing if he could have brought the interview to an end.

"How about salary?" he said.

"No, no, my boy," Mr. Wallace quickly and firmly cut him off. "There's no salary connected with it. It's all on a commission basis, but with your appearance, education and background you should have no trouble at all. The most important quality which makes for success is enthusiasm—rushing out and finding the business. That's why I love this work and find it so fascinating. Today I speak to an elevator operator, tomorrow to a bank president."

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"When can I begin?" asked Bob, reasoning this was the fastest way to end the interview.

"There is one more thing I would ask you to keep in mind," Mr. Wallace started up again. "You will be faced, at first, by many hours of discouragement. Set up some goal and don't lose sight of it. If you wish, think of me. I own my own home, free and clear. I've sent my two children through college and I've just returned from a vacation in Bermuda. And aside from these things I have the satisfaction of knowing that our encyclopedias are in one out of every fifty homes in the city. Aren't these things worth working for?"

Bob was now at the point at which his replies took the form of affirmative grunts.

"Before I feel you are qualified for this job," Mr. Wallace continued, "there is a question I'd like to ask you. I've been interviewing people for many years now and your answer to this question will indicate to me how capably you'll handle this assignment. However, if your answer indicates you are not qualified, don't feel too badly. Some of us were cut out for one thing, some for another. Now to get to the question; are you ready?"

"Shoot," said Bob with a great effort.

"Why do you think you'd like to do this type of work?" asked Mr. Wallace as he leaned back in his chair and looked directly at Bob.

Bob's color came back to his face; he felt his limbs awaken. He leaned forward over the desk and with an unnatural gleam in his eyes he cupped his left ear with his left hand and asked, "What was that again?"

"Why do you think you'd like to do this type of work?" repeated Mr. Wallace unabashed.

"Because," began Bob resolutely, "because it would ——"

"If someone," boomed Mr. Wallace, "—if someone asked me that question today. If someone asked me that question today with these thirty-five years behind me, do you know what I'd say? Do you know what I'd say? I'd say, 'Because it would let me keep my thumb on the pulse of the nation. Because it would let me keep my thumb on the pulse of the nation.'"

Bob stood up, walked to the door, turned and surveyed Mr. Wallace for fully a minute, and then without a word of explanation rushed out of the office.

He afterward was unable to recall how he had left the building—whether he had descended in the elevator or had walked down the whole fourteen floors—but for a long while he wandered through the city, studying the crowds and the individuals who made up the crowds and examining the tall buildings and the theater marquees.

Communications

MR. HOOVER'S RECORD

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors: Dr. Walter John Marx alleges rather indignantly (November 5th) that Mr. Herbert Hoover's "character, personality and intelligence" have been "carefully undermined for the public by highly skilled and highly paid press agents." To the extent that the allegation is substantiated by the record, Dr. Marx's indignation does credit to his sense of personal decency.

Dr. Marx might have added, however—even though Mr. Lyons doesn't—that few, if any, Americans lashed out so frequently and so fiercely at President Hoover's public and official policies at the late Monsignor John A. Ryan. I take it that Monsignor Ryan will not be lightly dismissed as a petty political hack or an irresponsible character assassin. Incidentally, if the Monsignor were alive today, I seriously doubt that he would "crawl back into his hole" after reading Mr. Lyons's recent eulogy of Hoover.

I beg leave to resurrect the memory of Monsignor Ryan's consistent opposition to Mr. Hoover's policies lest Mr. Lyons's recent apologia—as seconded so enthusiastically by Dr. Marx—be accepted too uncritically as the final word on the economic philosophy of our only living ex-President.

Dr. Marx is entitled to his opinion that "Mr. Hoover is destined to go down in history as one of our greatest Americans." But surely he does not expect his appeal to the social encyclicals to go unchallenged. He states that Mr. Hoover "is in accord with the principles of subsidiarity advocated by the Popes in their social encyclicals." In view of Mr. Hoover's public record, I can only interpret this to mean that, in Dr. Marx's opinion, many of the most important legislative gains of recent years were enacted in violation of the principle of subsidiarity.

May I merely suggest that to concentrate too exclusively on either of the two sides of the coin of subsidiarity is as fallacious in theory as it is disastrous in practice? "Just freedom of action," says Pope Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno,* "must, of course, be left both to individual citizens and to families. . . ." Of course. But the Pontiff hastens to add—"yet only on condition that the common good be preserved and wrong to any individual be abolished."

Some Americans would argue that President Hoover paid more attention to the first clause of this sentence than to the second. Perhaps these Americans are mistaken in their analysis of Mr. Hoover's public record, but at least it can be said with perfect honesty that not all of them are "highly skilled and highly paid press agents." They have the highest esteem for Mr. Hoover as a person and for his humanitarian services both at home and abroad. They recognize the limitations of social legislation, and they are conscious of the dangers which are inherent in the legislative approach to social justice. Nevertheless they are not prepared to admit that Mr. Hoover's economic philosophy—even as brought up to date in his recent birthday address—is any more adequate to the needs of 1948 than it was to the needs of 1929-33.

Some of them, too, are wondering if and when Mr. Hoover will apply the principle of subsidiarity to the Taft-Hartley Act and publicly call for its modification or repeal. For, as Dr. George Taylor explains so effec-

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tively in his extremely important book, "Government Regulation of Industrial Relations," the outstanding characteristic of the Taft-Hartley Act is that, in violation of the principle of subsidiarity, it goes out of its way to transfer to the Federal Government the determination of a number of delicate and very important issues which could be handled much more satisfactorily by the parties to collective bargaining.

Finally, at least one of these Americans is also unwilling to admit that Mr. Hoover's Philadelphia speech "stood out among the mass of verbiage poured from both conventions." That's a matter of opinion, of course, and a relatively unimportant detail, but in view of Dr. Marx's apparent desire to silence any further criticism of Mr. Hoover's policies and principles I merely wanted to get on the record before the case is permanently closed.

Rev. George G. Higgins.

FOOL'S HEART

St. Paul, Minn.

TO the Editors Oh, come now! To my knowledge, Thomas Jefferson never said that all men are "born in the image and likeness of God." But he did say, in *haec ipsissima verba,* that all men "are created equal," and following that he made it plain that what he meant was: equal in rights. But that is the very proposition, of which you assert that a "more lamentably and demonstrably ridiculous proposition was never made." And yet, in the latter part of the same editorial fulmination, you pat yourselves on the back for sharing a "splendid social backwardness" with Thomas Jefferson.

Of course you know I am quoting the initial editorial in your issue for October 22. Don't you think you slipped a cog there? Indeed, didn't you slip more than two or three cogs? Or do you assume to find a distinction between being "born equal" and being "created equal?" Or, between being equal in rights and being equal in "rights and dignity"? You see, I'm trying to help you find an out.

G. W. C. Ross
College of St. Thomas.

Providence, R. I.

TO the Editors: Reading the editorial, "Fool's Heart," in the October 22nd issue, it likewise occurred to me that the same Psalm 52, which states in Verse 1: "The fool said in his heart: There is no God," also contains in Verse 6 the consequences of such an attitude: "They have not called upon God: therefore they have trembled with fear where there was no fear."

Rev. Pierre Conway, O.P.

FOOD PARCELS

FATHER PIERRE CHAILLET, S.J., care of C. O. S, O. R., Paris, France, is collecting food and clothing for the needy of Lille, Lyons and Paris. Parcels marked "Par bon soins de S.N.C.F." will receive special handling.

Deutscher-Caritas Verband, Bayernallee, Berlin-Charlottenburg, Germany, is collecting food, clothing and contributions for the desperately impoverished Catholic community in North Leipzig, 90 percent of them refugees.

Recent appeals for food parcels, especially to help orphans and the aged, have come from:

Rev. Georg Brichlmair, S.J.
Universitats platz 1
Vienna 1, Austria

Rev. Ernst Musial
Holbeinstrasse, 70
Frankgurt a/ Main (Rhein-Hess)
Germany (American Zone)

The Labor Movement

The People Aren't So Dumb

THE fascinating argument about Christian Industrialism (see below) should not distract us from the obligation to give a short cheer for the upset perpetrated by President Truman and the Democratic Party after all the wise guys, including this writer, had given them up for gone geese.

The American people aren't so dumb, after all. Just why they all voted as they did is, and will remain, a mystery, but they had a lot of good reasons: Dewey, the 80th Congress, thinning pocketbooks, Taft-Hartley, housing (or the absence of it), to mention only a few.

The Democrats' rebirth has virtually killed all prospects of the labor-backed new party which Walter Reuther and friends were once so hot for, and about which even William Green allowed himself to say a few kind words back in the pre-election gloom. And the lovely pasting that was given to Henry Wallace and his ill-timed and ill-starred venture won't help to resurrect the corpse.

But more of this another time. The controversy beckons. What is important is that the American people were smart enough to get fed up with the reactionary swing after only two years. What we will be able to do with this liberal swing is now the big question.

Christian Industrialism III

Of course the big question really is: "Can mass production be reconciled with the demands of human personality?" or "Is a Christian industrialism possible?"

Norman McKenna, a veteran Actist, says (Commonweal, Nov. 19) that there is no basic conflict between the Agrarians and what Ed Willock calls the "we-and-the-Pope Industrial planners," that there is room for both. It is true that there is no conflict with a reasonable agrarianism, as Father Cantwell points out. If there is one member of the industrial apostolate who maintains that rural life is a scandal and an abomination, then we have yet to hear of him.

The point is that the Agrarian camp is heavily larded with articulate apostles and prophets who refuse to admit that there is any room, place or justification for an industrial apostolate. Somebody has to give way. Somebody is wrong. Maybe everybody is wrong. But we have

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to resolve this thing one way or the other. We should try to resolve it with love, without bitterness, as Mrs. Stancioff suggests, and if this writer has been guilty of snide remarks in the attempt to gain an empty advantage, which he probably has been, then he is sorry and hopes the victims will forgive him.

By the way, Brother McKenna's suggestion that the urban apostles move out into the country summons up an amusing picture, because many of the most articulate and dogmatic apostles among the Agrarians have long since been firmly entrenched in the city. (Now that's an example of the sort of thing you shouldn't say.)

Let's see if we can't work out some kind of middle ground. The industrial camp admits that there are all kinds of things wrong with industrialism, with mass production as we know it.

Most of us agree that there are jobs in modern factories that would warp the toughest personality. We have all heard about assembly lines and most of us have shuddered at the idea of working on one. (By the way, has anybody here actually worked on an assembly line?)

We have accused the Agrarians of sweeping vagueness in their denunciations of mass production and they have accused us of vagueness in our defense. Both are right. In short, it is a legitimate complaint that, considering the rotten fruits of industrialism to date, there is a certain burden of proof on those who maintain that a sound, human, Christian industrialism is possible.

What exactly then do we mean when we say that we can imagine a Christian factory? Well, let's try to imagine one.

In the first place, it would have to have a bona fide union. That is basic. There are some plants that are so nice to work in, they say, that the help doesn't want a union. Don't believe it. Maybe they don't want what they believe to be unionism, but there isn't a self-respecting group of workers anywhere who don't want to be able to stand up to the boss and tell him where to head in when the occasion demands. And the occasion always demands sooner or later. Without a union, without some organization that can speak for, and protect, the helpless individual, that kind of talk, that kind of independence and dignity is impossible.

Secondly, this plant would pay living wages and, if possible, a guaranteed annual wage. It would give its workers a share in the profits and shares in the stock. It would not be too big. It would encourage workers' participation, through their union representatives and directly through individual suggestions, in the making of all basic management policy. The word was "all" and that includes price policy, which directly affects the worker because it determines whether or not he is going to continue working.

It would have an active labor-management committee that would concern itself with the running problems of plant management (see the column that started this whole thing in COMMONWEAL, Oct. 1). It would have worker representatives on the board of directors. If there were certain jobs in the plant that were deadening because of their monotony or difficulty, these jobs would be rotated. It would, if possible, be located in the country or in a small town. It would be light, airy, attractive and as pleasant as possible to work in.

Does all this sound fantastic, unrealistic, impractical? The fact is that there are very practical, hardheaded employers right here in America who are, right this very minute, practicing one or more of every proposal listed above.

Take, for example, a report—hot off the press—on relations between the Libbey-Owens-Ford Co. and the CIO Glass Workers. This company has eight plants and 7,500 workers and is one of the top producers of glass in the country.

The report says this: "At LOF more and more vital production decisions, and particularly the means of implementing such decisions, are being made jointly by the company and the union." Although it has the right, under the contract, to do such things as set a new bonus rate, schedule operations, introduce new machinery and new production methods, take disciplinary action, etc., in practice the company "invariably" consults with union representatives before taking such steps.

For the benefit of the hardheaded types, the report goes on, "This is a realistic recognition that production is facilitated not only by the men who give orders, but also by the men who possess the influence to get them accepted and followed."

Or take the McCormick Co. of Baltimore, one of the largest spice manufacturers in the world. They have a labor-management committee, a profit-sharing plan, a guaranteed annual wage, *and they also rotate jobs,* not only to break the monotony, but to give as many workers as possible a feeling for the enterprise as a whole so that they identify themselves with it and lose the sense of being an isolated cog in the wheel.

Then there is the Louisville Varnish Works and the Adamson Storage Tank outfit of Palestine, Ohio (see John Chamberlain's article in the Christmas issue of *Life* in 1946)—both noted for their 50-50 profit-sharing plans and excellent labor relations. Adamson, by the way, has a contract with the CIO Steelworkers. There is also Hormel Meat Co. of Minnesota (another CIO contract) which has one of the best guaranteed-annual-wage-plus-profit-sharing plans in the country and is also a remarkably successful operator in a highly competitive, seasonal industry. At Hormel they change jobs a lot, but mainly to adjust production to seasonal demand and so keep everyone working. This is a case of how pursuit of one good objective—the annual wage—produces good by-products.

The mention of Hormel reminds one of an employer with a similar name, Léon Harmel, the French textile manufacturer whom Peter Maurin of *The Catholic Worker* used to rave about back in the days when the C. W. had a slightly more flexible line than it has now. Harmel had all kinds of things going, including family allowances and workers on the board of directors.

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Add Nunn-Bush Shoes, LaPointe Machine Works, Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Supplies to the list. Perhaps none of those mentioned are perfect, but all of them illustrate the practicality of applying human values, Christian values, to the problems of mass production and still taking in a reasonable profit.

General Johnson, by the way, who has written an excellent book, "Or Forfeit Freedom," on his own ideas, has pioneered in building attractive, decentralized plants in the country. He even goes so far as to put his power plants some distance from the factory so that noise and dirt will be eliminated. He too has CIO *contracts*.

This probably won't satisfy Mr. Antonucci (COMMONWEAL, Nov. 12), who insists that every worker must be "responsible for the whole product." Was there ever a time when that was really true—since the dawn of human life, that is? The medieval shoemaker certainly did not make the nails that went into his shoes, or the hide either. What about the cathedrals? Was that un-Christian work because most of the workmen worked on only a small part of the building? How ridiculous can you get if you apply the Agrarian dogmas that rigidly?

As Father Smith points out, we are not all sensitive, creative artists. Some people are quite happy doing work that would shatter more delicate souls. If an artist—in the corrupt, modern sense of that word—flops as an artist or resists his vocation and winds up doing a factory hand's work, the resulting frustration and unhappiness are not necessarily the fault of the factory owner.

What we want is that the ordinary Joe who is doing about the kind of work for which he was designed by God shall have the *opportunity* to take as much responsibility and feel as much identification, as much sense of craftsmanship, as much sense of partnership as he is capable of taking and feeling. If we can accomplish that, we shall enough artists in the true, scholastic sense of the word.

A word with Ed Willock: it is the duty of all men—whether as individuals, groups or classes—to seek the common good. Right? It is also the duty of all men to cooperate with other men, groups or classes in so far as they are seeking the common good. Right? And neither of us has to quote the Pope to prove it.

So that even now, even with the NAM, it is our duty to cooperate in so far as the NAM seeks the common good. And as soon as the NAM starts seeking—if ever—we must start cooperating. We don't have to wait for the *"ordines"* or anything else at all. We must start from where we are. We must work with the tools and the materials that God gave us. On one thing we agree: we can't go back; we must go forward.

The road ahead is long and rough. There are plenty of employers, plenty of labor leaders who must be converted before a Christian industrialism will be possible on anything but an individual plant basis. But we will never make it unless we can get together and concentrate a lot more brains, energy and manpower on the job than we are concentrating now. Can we get together or can't we? God grant we can.

JOHN C. CORT

The Screen

Never Underestimate the Power

THE movies may kid around a lot about what chumps their heroes and heroines make of themselves, but somehow they usually come to George Bernard Shaw's conclusion that the determined woman is the superman who gets her man. During almost all of *"June Bride,"* Bette Davis acts like a wise guy, the bright editor of a magazine called "Home and Mother." She holds her chief writer (Robert Montgomery) at arm's length and turns on the lights every time he turns 'em off as an introduction to a necking scene. Even when the two of them go with their staff to a typical Midwest home to do a June feature on a typical small-town wedding, Bette has to work overtime to keep Bob in line. As it happens, the Midwest house turns out to be too typical for the magazine, so the staff makes it over; and the principals for the wedding are not in love with each other at all, so Bob has to rearrange the four young people involved. All this provides a lot of laughs—mainly because the lines are funny and Davis and Montgomery give them the works. At times the dialogue and situations get a little out of hand, as if Scriptwriter Ranald MacDougall thought that making them risqué would make them more humorous. Director Bretaigne Windust keeps things moving at a fast clip right up to the inevitable finale when Bette, realizing she wants Bob more than she wants to be boss-man on a woman's magazine, turns out a few lights herself.

"You Gotta Stay Happy" left me very unhappy indeed, mainly because Joan Fontaine also gets her man in the finale. But I must quickly add that the man in this case is nice, shy James Stewart (portraying the principal owner of a two-plane airline), and Joan is an unhappy, neurotic $80,000,000 heiress. This film, directed by H. C. Potter, who usually has a delightful sense of humor, tries to be another of those slap-happy affairs about events on a long, cross-country trip. In Jimmy's plane are Co-pilot Eddie Albert, whose philosophy gives the film its title; Joan, who is running away from the husband she married on advice from her uncle (Roland Young) and her psychiatrist; a chimpanzee who smokes cigars; an embezzler with a suitcase full of money; a honeymooning couple; a corpse and miscellaneous freight, including lobsters that are supposed to be in California and still be edible. The plane arrives late for various reasons that I didn't find very funny—but since comedy is usually a one-man's-meat problem, you may find the situations hilarious. No matter how much you try, however, you can't sell me on the idea of any future happiness for Jimmy once he is tied to this neurotic woman—even if she has a face like Joan Fontaine's and eighty million.

"Unfaithfully Yours" is another of those tongue-in-cheek satires made by Preston Sturges, who writes, directs and produces his pictures. His subject-matter this time is jealous husbands, and he follows his usual cynical pattern of showing people up as the boobs they frequently

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are. However, this time the woman (Linda Darnell) has got her man, and she succeeds in keeping him in spite of his silly notions about her being in love with his secretary (Kurt Kreuger). The husband (nicely played by Rex Harrison) is a famous symphony conductor. While he conducts a program (of exceptionally good music, by the way) he imagines a series of sequences depicting what he might do: 1) kill his wife in such a way that the lover is blamed; 2) give them both his blessing and some money; 3) play Russian roulette with the lover and perhaps blow his own brains out. What actually happens immediately after the concert is a riot of fun and slapstick that makes the husband a frustrated victim of this brave new world's machines and contraptions. Sturges, who loves to spit venom, spits some very effective cinema. His excellent cast includes Rudy Vallee, Barbara Lawrence, Edgar Kennedy and a lot of minor players who add to the fun. "Unfaithfully Yours" won't make you feel mellow, but if you want to laugh at your fellow man, this is your opportunity.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books

The Roosevelt Myth. John T. Flynn. Devin-Adair. $3.50.

NO ONE can deny the ability of John T. Flynn. He writes well. He writes convincingly. He preserves a sense of humor. Let no one doubt his sincerity; but somewhere along the line Mr. Flynn saw a vision. He believes that by some power he has been called to reveal the truth, the whole truth, about "that man" Roosevelt. Not so many years ago he regularly exposed the fallacies of Republican economics as a columnist in the *New Republic*. He was a telling antagonist then, and he still retains much of his force. Now, however, he is on a crusade, and like many crusaders he has lost that fine sense of balance and precision in judgment so essential in evaluating public men and events.

No admirer of the late Franklin Roosevelt believes him faultless in character and action. His mistakes have been pointed out in recent months by many of his closest friends. An objective judgment of his administration could not omit them. To describe the Roosevelt régime as one great failure and fraud, however, could only come from a mind completely embittered and biased. Mr. Flynn makes all vents serve his purpose—the painting of a picture of a Roosevelt confused, crafty and sinister. Of several possible ways of interpreting a Rooseveltian act, Mr. Flynn invariably chooses the most damning. It must be said to the author's credit, however, that he gives no credence to the typical Roosevelt hater's last libel that the President took his own life.

When Mr. Flynn tells us that World War I and II resulted from the economic socialization prevalent in European countries from the opening of the present century and ignores every other force that lay behind these catastrophes, one is bound to conclude that he shapes history to his desires. When he concludes that Roosevelt did not tell the truth when he told his friends that John L. Lewis baldly asked him for the Democratic nomination for Vice President on the ground that Lewis was too astute to do such a thing, we wonder if Mr. Flynn knows his Lewis. In the presidential campaign just concluded, Mr. Dewey's managers told us that John L. Lewis asked for the post of Secretary of Labor in the event of Mr. Dewey's election. Despite Mr. Flynn's high opinion of Lewis's clever restraint, asking for high office seems to approach the habitual with the chief of the United Mine Workers.

An objective and critical analysis of any national administration is welcomed by all scholars worthy of the name. It is unfortunate that a man of Mr. Flynn's talents has not given us that analysis. His deep-seated bitterness has prevented such an accomplishment, and we are all losers because of it.

JEROME G. KERWIN.

Roosevelt and Hopkins. Robert E. Sherwood. Harper. $6.00.

THE nine hundred pages of this book do not really offer an analysis of the notorious and seemingly incongruous relationship between Franklin Roosevelt and his chief of staff, Harry Hopkins, so that the title may be a trifle misleading. This does not mean that the book is not an important and valuable document.

In the main part it describes the discussions, meetings, and plannings which were held by high political, diplomatic, and military persons during the past war, using as reference the forty cases of notes left by Hopkins when he died. Mr. Sherwood, who was associated closely with Hopkins as a speech writer for President Roosevelt, has properly filled in the empty spaces and supplied the background of the war in an objective and interesting manner. He is not a member of the growing cult of Rooseveltian iconoclasts, but he certainly does not believe that the New Deal leader was impeccable, and he was fully aware of many defections in Hopkins's life.

Hopkins was not quite the unscrupulous, scheming person depicted in many editorials and cartoons. Sherwood constantly interpolates this long narrative with accounts of his sickness and his indifference to it during arduous conferences and dangerous voyages; he explains that Hopkins was paid less money for his government work than he had been paid as a social worker. Further, commendations from such disparate characters as Churchill (his kinship with Hopkins was surprisingly close), Marshall, Stalin, De Gaulle, Stimson, indicate that Hopkins may have been something other than a "modern Rasputin."

Perhaps Churchill's humorous title, "Lord Root of the Matter," gives the best short description of Hopkins's special quality. He was not a learned man, not a successful business man, not a famous technician. He was an example of the charismatic personality which often comes to prominence in political affairs. He was a doer, what is called an "expediter." There was in him an intuitive sense which permitted him to know what Roosevelt wished, and a common sense which permitted him to act out the wish quickly and efficiently. The deference paid him by foreign officials is evidence of his ability as a "supreme office boy."

Despite Hopkins's accomplishments—his work for the poor and unemployed, his tortured struggles for victory during the war, his feverish effort to reach an understanding with Russia (in this project he seems to have been influenced by quantitative Soviet concessions rather than qualitative ones)—one has the impression that he

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was playing a game, that he was acting in these matters only as vigorously as he would have acted in any vocation. He appears (so does Roosevelt, to some extent) to be the kind of person dynamized more by the *doing,* and by *his* act of doing than by the end or value of the doing. There is a constant self-consciousness: himself acting a historical part, himself among famous people. There is a kind of connivance with the operation at hand, a titillation from the participation in it. And one feels that this condition is more firmly attested to by the underplaying; by the extreme frankness in interviews, the "goddam-its" and "bastards" of his vocabulary, the digging to the root of the matter. He suffered the illness that touches many men in these times, a lack of integrity —in the real sense of that word. He might be associated with the night-club owner turned reporter, the reporter turned expert, the educator turned prophet, the priest turned actor. But this is not so much a criticism as an explanation. At any rate, Hopkins comes out of this book with heroic proportions, and his picture is now more in focus than it was before.

There are many interesting sidelights: Roosevelt wondering about impeachment; Churchill exhibiting his enormous alcoholic capacity; Harriman quizzing the Russians about freedom of religion; Marshall insisting on a cross-Channel assault; De Gaulle refusing to meet Roosevelt.

The job of putting this book together required a great amount of reading, sorting, traveling, interviewing. Mr. Sherwood is due thanks for bringing off the job well.

GEORGE MILES.

The Corner That Held Them. Sylvia Townsend Warner. Viking. $3.00.

FROM the first page the reader is quite certain that this is an admirable book. It starts with a bang, and the more he reads, the more enthralled he becomes, so that the Berlin Lift, the election, China, the Marshall Plan, recede into that so fortunately far, far away twentieth century. The reader is more and more completely settled in the fourteenth. Not that it is outwardly more serene, or more comfortable: there is the Black Death, the constant threat of mysterious illness, there is almost ceaseless cold, and the continual damp. There are surly serfs that grudge and glower and finally revolt; there is a lurking of heresy, and more than a smell of necromancy. But there is, in spite of all, such an april immediacy of experience, such clarity of vision, such compassion unsmeared by pity, such tenderness unrusted by sentiment, that one breathes a "diviner ether, a rarer air."

"The Corner That Held Them" is a novel, almost, it might be called a chronicle, of the convent of Oby, in the fen country in England, between 1349 and 1382. The abbey was founded by Brian de Retteville in memory of his unfaithful, but rich wife. He gave all her own fortune to its endowment, and half his own property. "There was land and water, and a population of serfs, not many but enough, there were buildings and outbuildings, a fish pond, an excellent dovecote. What more could women, holy women, desire?" The first prioress was not so sure. "It seemed to her that Brian de Retteville's choice of site had been unrealistically too close to the mind of Saint Benedict, since it was a nunnery he had founded. Men with their inexhaustible interest in themselves may do well enough in a wilderness, but the shallower egoism of women demands some nourishment from the outer world, and preferably in the form of danger or disaster."

These, the Oby nuns, were to have in plenty. Almost at once, the Black Death. The description of this is magnificent: whether it is of the house where every monk had died, or of that other, where it was every monk but one—which was the worst "that desolate figure on whom the brand of life was scarred like an inversion of the brand of death." Into the beleaguered convent of Oby walks a vagrant, "a large, rawboned man with a hooked nose and thick lips." Illegitimate, raised in a brothel, till the establishment clubbed together and sent him across the way to the canons to be made a clerk of, he has come to Oby by devious routes. "Causation tunnels like a mole under the surface of our free will, and because of an attack of ringworm in Toledo I am about to say Mass in an English convent where they are dying of pest."

He stays, of course; he has the pest, and survives, and remains supposedly a priest for the nuns until he dies, an old, fat man. And the events are seen now through his eyes, now through those of the nuns, so the whole book is mosaic, is tapestry, is the most colorful weaving. And the details are exquisite as capitals in illuminated manuscripts, the curl of a *B*'s loops or the filigree of an *M*: sardonic humor peppering the whole. When the prioress and her cousin, the worldly prior of Etchingdon, meet after twenty years, he tells her "you are lucky, you don't have to herd a mixed flock," and he began to mock at the incommodities of the Gilbertine order, telling of his quarrel with the nuns, who were supposed to see to the victualing of the monks, but supplied them with nothing but soup, "I reminded the dear creatures of their vow of obedience. The next day the cabbage soup had radishes in it—two and a half radishes (we counted them) for each man."

And the philosophy: "No summer is so long, so wide, as the summer before it. Time, a river, hollows out its bed, and every year the river flows in a narrower channel and flows faster." And, when his sins turn the pseudo-priest crazy, there is the account of tying the black cock to his head: "Till past midsummer Sir Ralph was mad, and every morning he was led out to enjoy the sun. There he would trudge up and down, blinking behind his feathers . . . sometimes he just sat still, a water-logged bulk, or he would stare at a bush and tremble all over, and then utter a long thrilling howl like the howl of a dog which smells the approach of death . . . several cocks had corrupted and been removed, and still there was no change . . . a mad priest became part of the routine of the house, and an accustomed nuisance, like the wash-house door which for so long had been warped and would not close properly."

A good convent should have no history, Miss Townsend Warner declares, and Oby has a molehill upon molehill crescendo of misfortunes. The spire that is Prioress Alicia's vow and dream falls, and one of her nuns almost certainly destroys herself in its fall; there is a murder, wonderfully understated; there are births and deaths and happenings aplenty; as Charles de Foucauld said as he darned the socks of twenty small orphans, aged six to sixteen, of whom he had been put in charge: "And they say one becomes a Trappist to escape the cares of the world!"

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The feel of the English countryside has rarely been so well given. "Riding out with his hawk, Sir Ralph began to have a hawk's-eye view of his world. The river ceased to be a fisherman's river, a rosary of pools and shallows; from the back of the dun horse he saw it as a progress, winding like some wasteful history, with here and there the record of a forsaken channel, such as a row of alders sulking in a hollow, or a long ribbon of rushes." Or, "he could look out and see the dragon flies darting over the moat or the aspen quiver of the reflected sunlight on the mossed wall, or a water-rat swimming across and dragging its wheat-ear pattern of ripples after it." Or, "brilliant, senseless, irresponsible, the landscape stretched before him. What soul was here, what trace of praise to its Maker . . . except where man's sad hand had etched it. . . . Now it was spying. The night's rain glittered in every runnel, flashed from bush and bramble, lay pearled in the clasp of daisies and liverwort leaves."

But no amassing of examples can give the cumulative effect of such superb writing: it has a digested, masticated majesty that gives an ache of pleasure. This is English at its best, relating England when she was at her best. Everything is here: the excitement of the vernacular, in the lay of Mamillion; the glory of music in measure, in *Triste Lovsir,* and the leper-cote; the smell of revolution, in the account of the Peasants' Revolt; the mystery of sanctity, in the relation of Bishop Walter and his disastrous visitation. And always the humanity, warm, tender, cosy: not the *"homo sum"* of Terence, but the *"ex anima rationali et humana carne subsistens"* of the Creed.

ANNE FREMANTLE.

Soviet Russia and the Far East. David J. Dallin. Yale. $5.00.

MR. DALLIN is well-known as one of the most realistic writers on the Soviet Union. His story of the Russian slave labor system was an important work that destroyed American illusions about the moral foundations of the proletarian state. His new book tells the history of Soviet intrigues and Soviet expansion in Asia from September, 1931, down to the present situation.

The events presented in Dallin's book reveal an expansionistic dynamism that has been still more successful in Asia than in Europe. The inclusion of Mongolia, Manchuria and North Korea into the Soviet orbit is almost complete, while there is now a big drive to the South in the Chinese civil war. We are perhaps not far from the creation of a Far Eastern Cominform. But this will not be the end of Soviet dynamism. The Kremlin aims at a "co-prosperity sphere" for all the Asiatic nations under its own leadership. Dallin's historical presentation reveals the steadfast and well-calculated Soviet policy that now makes the shores of the Pacific a new base for Soviet expansion.

In these days of Communist conquest of Manchuria even skeptical readers will see how right Dallin is in treating the Chinese Communists as an arm of Soviet international activities and how much we were duped by those fellow-travelers who tried to make us believe that the Chinese Communists were independent of Stalin, and mere humanitarian, agrarian reformers.

Dallin shows how the success of Russian policy has been based on a chain of broken promises. From the Soviet assurance to China that the USSR would evacuate Manchuria within three months to the elections in Southern Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands for the Supreme Soviet (in order to demonstrate the finality of the political changes introduced there), the story of Soviet activities in the Far East competes in illegality with Hitler's brutal adventures.

The presence of American forces in Japan has unhappily given us an inflated sense of security which has obscured a sober recognition of the Russian successes.

According to Dallin the Russian people is indifferent if not antagonistic to the Soviet Union's conquests in the Far East. It may be a sound instinct to fear that Russian expansion in China and Korea makes a conflict with the United States unavoidable, a conflict that can only lead to catastrophe for the Russians.

This book is the second volume of a work on Russian policy in the Far East since 1860. The other volume, relating the history from the Russian acquisition of the key area in the Pacific before 1930, will be published next year.

MAX FISCHER.

What Is Man? C.-F. Ramuz. Translation by Gouverneur Paulding. Pantheon. $2.75.

WHAT the translator has done in this small volume —the quality of whose English is excellent—has been to fashion into a coherent whole selections from three studies by Ramuz ("Taille de l'Homme," "Questions" and "Besoin de Grandeur") which, though having appeared between 1933 and 1937, have yet retained their pertinence. The ground covered in the essay is extensive enough—from a discussion of the function of the writer through a detailed exposition of the inadequacies in Marxist philosophy and Soviet practice (which is one of the most penetrating analyses this reviewer has seen) to a thoughtful presentation of man's need for a Personal God—but the impression obtains that each section grows naturally out of what has come before. To have achieved such an integration pays tribute, surely, to the skill wherewith its editor has put the book together.

Throughout, the reader is made to feel that he has been let in upon the thinking-processes of an honest man. Concerning some of the reflections, there may be room for reservation—this reviewer would qualify the interpretation set upon God in Nature (pp. 151-161)—but the great mass, at least, will be seen as sensible and sound. Ramuz's *forte* lies in his ability to give expression to the basic questions which trouble thinking people. He would not claim the status of the philosopher, but the reader will recognize the philosopher's cast of mind. Nor would Ramuz consider that he had found answers for his queries, yet the reader will sense where his sympathies lie. That they are Christian sympathies is everywhere apparent.

HENRY G. J. BECK.

The Meek Shall Inherit. Zofia Kossak. Transl. by Maurice Michael. Roy. $3.00.

FOR those who would write a novel about a man's spiritual awakening, there are generally two perils. One is that the author should be so restrained that he leaves to the reader's imagination the motivation, the struggle, the errors, the effects, the triumph. The other is simply to depict in full color the writhing of a damned soul, the shower of grace (usually through the medium of another who has already risen to the heights), the poor sinner beset by temptations, and the final purifica-

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tion by fire, followed by a glorious death amid loving, tearful friends. In either case, the "hero" is usually a milquetoast figure whose humility is servile rather than saintly, whose ultimate reunion with God is as painful to the reader as apparently it was to the author.

Zofia Kossak, in her latest novel, has skilfully charted her course between this Scylla and Charybdis, and has written a book which is at once a good story and a realistic study of how a man can freely give up luxury and power to serve God in that manner most difficult for him—in poverty and subjection.

Based on seventeenth-century records discovered in the nineteenth, it is the story of Casimir Korsak, knight of Poland, son and heir of the Lord of Globeki. In a war against the Muscovite, Casimir, accompanied by his penniless cousin Constanty, acquits himself well, but his mind is troubled by thoughts of the lot of the serf. In the heat of battle he seizes, unwittingly, his serf's coat, and it is on this error that the story hinges.

Mme. Kossak, whose "Blessed Are the Meek" was a best-seller a few years ago, has made a highly readable novel out of a story which could have been maudlin and oversweet. Her Casimir is a good man, possibly a saint, but he is nevertheless a man, with all the failings that implies—pride, love of comfort, distaste for what is difficult. The amount of research is obvious, but it is not of the sort that springs up and demands to be noticed. For readers who are wearying of the average lush historical novel "The Meek Shall Inherit" should prove to be a welcome change. ELIZABETH ANN COOPER.

Masterpieces of Religious Verse. Edited by James Dalton Morrison. Harper. $5.00.
Golden Legends. Collected by Samuel Cummings. Pellegrini & Cudahy. $4.00.

SO MUCH has been said and written about the irreligious spirit of our time, not without gloating by all aggressive enemies of faith. This unseemly rejoicing, however, is rather premature. Where formal religion appears to be absent, even there the pull of religion remains. This is understandable. The culture of what we call Christendom has diffused itself through the centuries through the body politic of Western Europe and America. Even so-called secular activities rarely retain the quality of being purely secular. Always at its core is the Christian ethic, and sometimes—the pull. People still demand poetry inspired, directly or indirectly, by religion or religious sentiment.

This thought has been engendered by these two collections, one of verse, the other of short stories. It is characteristic of both that many of the selections included may, with enthusiasm, be acclaimed by the irreligious as well as the religious. In Mr. Morrison's anthology, which includes the respectable total of 2,020 poems by 900 poets, we have, apart from such legitimate specimens as "Lead Kindly Light" and similar authentic religious verse, such examples as "O Captain! My Captain!" and this extract from "Julius Caesar":

> His life was gentle; and the elements
> So mix'd in him, that Nature might stand up,
> And say to all the world, "This was a man!"

This can scarcely be called religious verse; but conceivably, the anthologist, a former pastor of long experience and Professor of Preaching at the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, had chosen the quotation to pay tribute to

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the idea of a Christian gentleman in Shakespeare's mind, for surely there couldn't have been any such idea in Julius Caesar's day.

In *Golden Legends,* subtitled "Great Religious Stories from Ancient to Modern Times," the anthologist is more careful of his definition; his selections, forty-five in number, beginning with the Joseph story in the Old Testament, proceed to a quintet of Parables in the New, thence to Boccaccio, John Bunyan, Swift, Goethe, Balzac, Hawthorne, Poe, Dickens, Melville, Flaubert, Anatole France, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Maupassant, Lagerlof, d'Annunzio, and clear down to our own time, which is represented by such worthies as Frank Norris, Dreiser, T.F. Powys, James Joyce, Aldous Huxley, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Steinbeck, etc. What is interesting about this excellent collection is that all these stories are definitely religious in theme and mood, yet you'd hardly define all their authors as religious men, that is, in any formal sense of the word. Mr. Cummings himself seems to have noted this discrepancy between the man and his work. In his own words: "We do not think of Theodore Dreiser, F. Scott Fitzgerald, or Boccaccio as exemplars of the life of the spirit, but here they are, and they speak with no uncertain voice. And because they have spoken when they did not need to speak . . . their speech has not only artistic clarity but ethical integrity. It is a pure flowering in somewhat unexpected ground, an unsolicited testimonial."

Precisely. But why, one may ask. Is it not the pull, which they would deny, but which is stronger than they? As for Mr. Morrison, he points to "the close affinity of religion and poetry." Quoting Santayana to the same effect, he adds that poetry seems to have been from its beginnings the handmaiden of religion. "Many poets," he says, "who are not generally regarded as religious are nevertheless profoundly religious in their implications." This is a thoroughly comprehensive if unequal collection. Big men and little men, equal before God, and all seekers of the City of God, rub shoulders, we hope, happily.

JOHN COURNOS.

Washington Allston. Edgar P. Richardson. Chicago. $10.00.

"WE LOVE nothing, we criticize everything," the sculptor-to-be, William Wetmore Story, confessed to James Russell Lowell. "Even the very atmosphere is critical. Every twig is intensely defined against the sky. The sky itself is hard and distant. . . . The heart grows into stone. The devil-side of enthusiasm (irritability) possesses us. There is no hearty love of everything, for we are afraid of making a mistake. We love unhappiness."

So Story described the New England to which Washington Allston, one of the greater American painters, returned in 1818. Only thirty-nine, Allston was to be so baffled by the New World that he never succeeded, in the twenty-five years which remained, in finishing "Belshazzar's Feast," the canvas on which he set his highest hopes. Thinking on this and other tragedies of the American artists of his century, Henry James wrote "The Madonna of the Future," and the defeat of Allston in Cambridgeport became the symbol of artistic impotence —so popular a symbol that not until Edgar P. Richardson began work on this study of Allston did we realize that although the master was unable to bring his beloved

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picture to perfection, he did turn out other paintings in his Cambridgeport studio.

Though Mr. Richardson has disclaimed any intention to write a biography of Allston, and prefers to have his contribution to our artistic history labeled a critical study, his summary of Allston's life is so rich in insights that many readers will decide that here is a biography in more than one sense of the word. Allston's "discovery" of color and light is set in the proper historical perspective (he was many years in advance of Delacroix), and his friendship for Coleridge is brilliantly explored. Last but not least, Mr. Richardson reminds us that Allston's "mist of brooding thought" was strikingly similar to the imaginings of the early Hawthorne.

If Mr. Richardson has one fault, it is that he is overkind to New England. To settle down in Cambridge after having warmed to the talk of Coleridge would be a dismal fate for anyone, but especially for a painter as sensitive as Allston.

"Washington Allston" is complete with a catalogue of existing or recorded paintings, and is illustrated with sixty plates, one in color. WAYNE ANDREWS.

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